

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 34, wherein the hydrophilic material in the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~ second portion primarily consists of cellulose fibers, cotton fibers, rayon fibers, jute, or peat moss.
4. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 34, wherein the hydrophilic material in the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~ second portion primarily consists of polyurethane foam or cellulose foam.
5. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 34 wherein the hydrophobic material in the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~ first portion primarily consists of polypropylene fibers, polyethylene fibers, polyester fibers, or hydrophobic bi-component fibers.
6. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 34, wherein the hydrophobic material in the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~ first portion primarily consists of polyethylene foam.

7. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 34 further comprising a liquid-pervious, hydrophobic material ~~layer~~ arranged between the absorbent body and the ~~hydrophilic absorbent material~~ second portion.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 34, wherein the hydrophobic material in the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~ first portion is constituted of a hydrophilic material which has been rendered hydrophobic.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) Absorbent article according to claim 34, wherein the article comprises a shaping member which, by means of influence from forces which the article is subjected to during use, has an ability to bring the wetting region into contact with the mucous membranes of the user.

14. (Previously Presented) Absorbent article according to claim 13, wherein the shaping member comprises compressions or folding notches.

15. (Previously Presented) Absorbent article according to claim 13, wherein the shaping member comprises an insert.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously Presented) Absorbent article according to claim 34, wherein the wetting region covers at least a portion of the absorbent body.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 36, wherein the wetting region covers at least a portion of the absorbent body.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article according to claim 34, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, panty-liner, or incontinence protector.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, panty-liner, or incontinence protector.

25. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article of claim 37, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, panty-liner, or incontinence protector.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, a panty-line, or incontinence protector.

27. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article according to claim 35, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes of the user.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes of the user.

29. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article of claim 40, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes only of the user.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Canceled)

32. (Canceled)

33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a liquid-pervious user-facing first side including a ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~
first portion consisting of a hydrophobic material, and a second portion forming a

wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user,
to define the region of the first side to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the
article,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface
layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the ~~two surface layers~~ first and second
sides,

~~wherein the first side exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed~~
~~adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, and which is the region of the first side~~
~~to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,~~

wherein the ~~wetting region~~ second portion consists of hydrophilic absorbent
material ~~that is~~ adapted to retain moisture so as to maintain the mucous membranes
of the user moist,

an outer edge ~~portion~~ of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion being bordered by
the hydrophobic material of the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~ situated laterally
~~outwardly of such edge~~ first portion, wherein an extent of the ~~wetting region~~ second
portion is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body.

35. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous
membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a liquid-pervious user-facing first side including a ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~
a first portion consisting of a hydrophobic material, and a second portion forming a
wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user,

to define the region of the first side to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the ~~two surface layers~~ first and second sides,

~~wherein the first side exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, which is the region of the first side intended to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,~~

wherein the ~~wetting region~~ second portion consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture,

an outer edge ~~portion of the wetting region~~ second portion being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer situated laterally outwardly of such edge~~ first portion, wherein an extent of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body,

wherein the ~~wetting region is situated on a hump~~ second portion is hump-shaped so as to project past the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~ first portion in the direction of a user.

36. (Currently Amended) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a liquid-pervious user-facing first side which includes a ~~liquid-pervious surface layer and a wetting region~~ first portion consisting of a hydrophobic material, and a second portion forming a wetting region consisting of a hydrophilic absorbent

material, the article further including a second side opposite the first side and having comprising a liquid impervious layer, ~~the liquid pervious surface layer formed of a hydrophobic material, the wetting region formed of a hydrophilic absorbent material, the wetting region arranged to be first wetted by body fluid, the absorbent body being disposed between the liquid pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer~~ first and second sides, an outer edge portion of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion being bordered by the ~~hydrophobic material of the liquid pervious surface layer situated laterally outwardly of such edge~~ material of the first portion wherein an extent of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the ~~wetting region is~~ second portion is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and ~~the wetting region~~ first receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion, and

maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retaining in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion.

37. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a liquid-impervious user-facing first side including ~~a liquid pervious surface layer~~ a first portion consisting of a hydrophobic material, and a second portion forming a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of

the user, to define the region of the first side to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the ~~two surface layers~~ first and second sides,

~~wherein the first side exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, and which is the region of the first side to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,~~

wherein the ~~wetting region~~ second portion consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture so as to maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist, an outer edge portion of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the liquid pervious surface layer which is situated laterally outwardly of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion and overlies the absorbent body.

38. (Currently Amended) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, ~~a liquid pervious layer and a wetting region disposed between first and second sides, the first side being liquid-pervious and including a first portion and a second portion,~~ the article further including a second side opposite the first side and ~~having comprising~~ a liquid impervious layer, the ~~liquid pervious surface layer~~ first portion formed of a hydrophobic material, and the ~~wetting region~~ second portion formed of a hydrophilic absorbent material, the ~~wetting region~~ second portion arranged to be first

wetted by body fluid, ~~the absorbent body being disposed between the liquid pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer~~, an outer edge portion of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the ~~liquid pervious surface layer~~ first portion which is situated laterally outwardly of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion and overlies the absorbent body, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the ~~wetting region~~ second portion is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and ~~the wetting region~~ first receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion; and

maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retained in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion.

39. (Currently Amended) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a user-facing liquid-pervious first side which includes a ~~liquid-pervious layer~~ and a ~~wetting region~~ a first portion and a second portion, the article further including a second side opposite the first side and having a liquid impervious layer, the ~~liquid pervious surface layer~~ first portion formed of a hydrophobic material, and the ~~wetting region~~ second portion formed of a hydrophilic absorbent material, the ~~wetting region~~ second portion arranged to be first wetted by body fluid, the absorbent body being disposed between the ~~liquid-pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer~~ first and second sides, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the ~~wetting-region~~ second portion is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and the ~~wetting-region~~ first receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the ~~wetting-region~~ second portion; and

maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retaining in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the ~~wetting-region~~ second portion,

wherein an extent of the ~~wetting-region~~ second portion is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body; and

wherein the ~~wetting-region is situated on a hump~~ second portion is hump-shaped so as to project past the ~~liquid-pervious surface-layer~~ first portion in the direction of the user.

40. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a user-facing liquid-pervious first side including a ~~liquid-pervious surface-layer~~ first portion consisting of hydrophobic material, and a second portion forming a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, to define the region of the first side intended to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the ~~two surface-layers~~ first and second sides,

~~wherein the first side exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, and which is the region of the first side to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,~~

wherein the ~~wetting region~~ second portion consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture, so as to maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist, an outer edge portion of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~ first portion which is situated laterally outwardly of the ~~wetting region~~ second portion and overlies the absorbent body,

wherein the ~~wetting region is situated on a hump~~ second portion is hump-shaped so as to project past the ~~liquid-pervious surface layer~~ first portion in the direction of the user.